

July 11, 1964

Mrs. Dora McCann
The McCanns at Home
VOR
New York City, N.Y.

Dear Dora,

Some one else has asked for Roberto, Ingrid and Das, so I am writing to ask if your relative wants them. I'd appreciate it if you'd let me know.

Let me bring you up to date on them, for there is news.

Because of your possible interest, I began working on Roberto and Das as soon as we got back from Delmarva, whenever I could. I now have both eating from the hand. They are not yet free and easy about it, but they do. They don't bite. And they do beg for their goodies. Early in the morning they are at the gate waiting for me. Each takes a piece of bread and runs off with it, coming back for more when it is consumed.

There also has been a tragedy, with as happy an ending as a tragedy can have in gooseedom. It all began when Ingrid had a brief and undetected affair - perhaps a single fling - with one of the Menden ganders. They have all marched off to science now, as I told you they would. None of the domesticated geese remain except the Romans. The last of them are now at the Walter Reed Hospital Animal Farm.

I didn't know Ingrid had had her little affair until the two eggs she was setting on hatched. Was I surprised! All her other eggs, which I had given to a friend, were infertile. One of her goslings looked like her; the other was typical of an Menden.

She was an indifferent mother, and the goslings were pretty much on their own. They followed her, but she never mothered them.

Well, our drought broke four days ago. I was leaving for the doctors early in the morning, and one of the goslings had gotten out. It was soggy wet when I caught it and put it back with the adults. Roberto immediately adopted it, as much as he could adopt any child, especially one not his own. Intermittently, he and Ingrid, from what Lil observed, took turns taking care of it. Lil finally decided unless she cared for it, the gosling would drown. She took it in the house, dried it and wrapped it with a towel, keeping it with her the rest of the day. It picked up quite a bit and looked as though it would survive. Alas, it didn't.

Something did come of the tragedy. Roberto has accepted Ingrid again. The three are again inseparable. Our best to you both.